

Inspection of an outstanding school: Kendal Nursery School

Brantfield, Queens Road, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 4PH

Inspection date: 3 October 2019

Outcome

Kendal Nursery School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Kendal Nursery School is an amazing place for children to learn and thrive. A group of parents and carers summed it up by saying, 'One word to describe this nursery is "wow!"' This is a sentiment held by many parents.

Children are extremely safe in this deeply caring environment. They have the freedom to explore and try out new things with confidence. Children are treated to a wide range of exciting activities. These are all designed to develop curiosity and joy in learning.

At this school, learning is active, magical and fun. Staff know just how to feed children's imaginations and develop a love of learning. For example, the outdoor provision is enchanting. It allows children to explore, have adventures and take risks safely. If needed, staff are always on hand to offer them support. As parents commented, 'Dens, chickens, mud kitchens, music – Kendal Nursery has it all.'

Staff have high expectations of all children. The expertise of staff ensures that children achieve all that they can. Children leave the nursery extremely well prepared for their next school and for the next stage of their lives.

Children behave exceptionally well in school. They quickly learn to share, take turns and make friends. We saw no evidence of bullying.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

This is a school where everyone has a passion for learning. Leaders are extremely knowledgeable about the school. The curriculum for all children is excellent. Staff know exactly how young children develop and learn. They know their children extremely well. Staff use their thorough knowledge of children's development to plan activities that are just right for every child. Activities capture children's imagination and link closely to their interests and ideas.

The classrooms and outdoor area are breathtaking. Children enjoy lots of rich learning opportunities. For example, children made vegetable soup. They talked about healthy foods and how to cut vegetables safely. Children chattered excitedly about tasting the soup. Outdoors is a wonderful space to learn and play. Some children were building a bridge and pretending to be 'Billy Goat Gruff'. They challenged themselves to jump off the bridge. For the first jump they held an adult's hand. Then, as they got braver, they excitedly jumped on their own.

Across the school, staff encourage children to chat, be inquisitive and to ask questions. Staff listen to children with interest and consideration. They encourage children to contribute their ideas so that learning becomes a shared adventure. In this atmosphere, children achieve exceptionally well across the whole curriculum. This includes children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are knowledgeable about the difficulties these children face.

Opportunities to learn mathematical skills are everywhere. Adults base these opportunities on real-life experiences. Children count conkers and twigs. They work out which items are the heaviest and lightest. Staff support children to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of number. Children use their knowledge to help their friends to count.

Stories, books and reading are central to everything that the school does. Children are enthralled when adults tell them traditional tales. They regularly retell these stories in their play. Children eagerly join in with well-known rhymes and refrains. They join in storytelling, adding their own ideas and imaginative twists. Adults make sure that a rich vocabulary is modelled throughout the classrooms. Staff benefit from excellent training in the development of early reading.

Children learn about different faiths and cultures. They enjoy going to the local library. Children enjoyed a visit to some nearby roadworks. The weekly visit to the woods is a highlight. Parents say how their children cannot wait to go on these trips. Children are full of delightful tales of their adventures when they return.

Leaders are highly respected. Staff value how leaders are sensitive to the amount of work that staff do. They say that they feel listened to and appreciated. Parents cannot praise staff enough. They say that staff always have time to talk about their children's day.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safety of children is paramount. It is everyone's responsibility. Clear policies and procedures guide staff. Well-trained staff know what to do if they are worried about a child. Children learn in a safe and secure environment.

Leaders are vigilant and work well with other agencies to support children and families. They act quickly if they have concerns.

Background

When we have judged a maintained nursery school to be outstanding we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Kendal Nursery School to be outstanding in October 2014.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	112091
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10046009
Type of school	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Vivien Kincey
Headteacher	Alyssa Dobbs
Website	www.brantfield.com
Date of previous inspection	14 October 2014

Information about this school

- The school provides educational provision for two-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

- We held meetings with the headteacher, governors, staff and a representative of the local authority.
- We looked in detail at reading, mathematics and physical development. For each of these subjects we held discussions with subject leaders and teachers, visited lessons, looked at samples of children's work and talked with children.
- We spoke with parents as they brought their children to school.
- We talked to children about the books they like to read.
- We held additional discussions with staff which focused on safeguarding. We also examined documentation relating to safeguarding.
- The lead inspector considered 25 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and nine responses from the online staff survey.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector

Cole Andrew

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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